

Master Recycler Composter Program

2004 is the third year of the partnership between WSU King County Extension (WSU KCE) and King County Solid Waste Division (KCSWD). Over the past three years great progress has been made towards integrating goals and objectives to create a solid partnership with concrete benefits. This briefing report will highlight some of the specific activities and successes related to WSU KCE's involvement with the King County Master Recycler Composter Program in first half of 2004.



The purpose of MRC Program is to train and support a cadre of volunteers who supplement KCSWD Waste Reduction/Recycling (WRR) outreach and education activities and are integrated with other Department of Natural Resources' outreach programs. These volunteers can provide King County residents with information and personalized assistance to promote the efficient use of natural resources.

Program Goals:

- Create and conduct an advanced training module for alumni
- Host continuing educational events for alumni
- Foster a strong sense of community and strengthen communication channels among MRCs
- Increase public awareness of the MRC Program
- Make connections with diverse and underserved communities to support and encourage their interest in resource conservation issues
- Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of MRC activities and education.

Specific Activities

2004 MRC Annual Meeting

On Thursday, January 29th WSU KCE conducted the 2004 Annual MRC meeting at the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery's Watershed Science Center. The event included:

- 2003 program highlights
- Volunteer recognition
- Outreach updates
- Additional ways to get involved
- Upcoming events
- Winter-wise tips for keeping homes healthy
- A chance for MRCs to network and catch up with fellow volunteers

In addition to the above features, this year's Annual Meeting included a continuing education component (see details in the Continuing Education section) focused on Single-Stream Recycling. The event drew more than twenty-five volunteers who enjoyed the evening's program and the chance to have dinner together.



MRCs learn the benefits of Natural Yard Care.

Photo D. Batura

2004 Advanced Training in the Spring AND Fall!

The focus of the 2004 Advanced Training is Bringing Natural Yard Care Steps to Life! This year the advanced training has been split into two components, spring and fall, in order to spread natural yard care topics to the maximum amount of volunteers and to highlight specific natural yard care practices that are particularly relevant during different seasons of the year.

Advanced Training Part 1 - Spring

On Saturday, March 13, WSU KCE conducted a 5-hour advanced training on Natural Yard Care, including in-depth information and hands-on activities to help get ready for the flood of spring outreach activities. This training helped MRCs bolster their knowledge about issues that affect the health of home landscapes and our watersheds. The training explored the main concerns and rotated volunteers through hands-on activities addressing plant placement, composting, and label reading.

Empowering volunteers to bring natural resource information to the public

2004 Continuing Education Events

Event 1

On Thursday, January 29, WSU KCE conducted a continuing education event in conjunction with the MRC Annual Meeting. The continuing education component featured guest speaker Kim Ducote of RA-BANCO Recycling, speaking on Single-Stream Recycling in King County.

Event 2

On Saturday, March 20, WSU KCE conducted a continuing education event focused on Biosolids and Biodiesel. MRCs traveled across the state to visit Natural Selection Farms and Biodiesel Research Plots in Yakima Valley to learn about King County's Biosolids Program for innovative recycling partnerships.



Sally Brown, UW Soil Scientist discusses
Canola crops grown for the production of
biodeisel.

Photo D. Batura

Next Steps



Cedar Falls.

Photo J. Medeiros

Continuing Education Event 3

On Saturday, July 17, MRCs will enjoy a tour of Cedar River Watershed hosted by Seattle Public Utilities naturalists for a unique tour of the Cedar River Watershed, the source of 70% of the Seattle area's drinking water. This 3-hour interpretive journey by bus and by foot into the 90,545-acre protected watershed (which is closed to unauthorized public access) is an unparalleled opportunity to experience a very special place. Following the tour, MRCs will regroup for a presentation by Darcy Batura about specific household causes of water quality and quantity degradation.

Roundtable Discussions – A New Evaluation Tool

In an effort to gather candid opinions about participating in the MRC program from alumni volunteers, WSU KCE will conduct a roundtable discussion group. The group will consist of 8-15 MRCs and the session will last approximately 2 hours. Target participants will be MRC volunteers in South King County who have not completed their 40 hours of outreach. The Roundtable Discussions work to identify barriers to volunteer participation. This task will be completed by fall of 2004.

Advanced Training Part 2 - Fall

The spring advanced training will be complemented with an additional Natural Yard Care training in the fall. This will be a great opportunity to reinforce these important messages and learn about yard care issues of special importance in the fall. The planning for this training is not complete, however WSU KCE plans to expand the message from "Natural Yard Care" to include "Natural Farm Care" and look at how King County farms are incorporating natural practices into their farm plans in order to produce safe, healthy local foods. During the fall we will have the opportunity to and visit local farms and learn from their research projects and sustainable farming practices which help them to reap a bountiful fall harvest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Batura".

Darcy Batura

Environmental Educator

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